

Public Information Department, 11150 East Blvd., Cleveland, Ohio 44106; 216/421-7340

PRESS RELEASE

March 14, 1990

Contact: Denise Horstman

ART MUSEUM ARRANGES EXCHANGE OF ART BETWEEN CHILDREN IN GREATER CLEVELAND AND ODAWARA, JAPAN Japanese Children's Works on View at Beck Center, May 6-June 3, 1990

Children in six Cleveland-area elementary schools are sharing their daily lives with children in Odawara, a town outside Tokyo that was one of the rest stops on the old Tokaido highway connecting Kyoto and Tokyo during the 19th century.

Life Images--A Child's View is an unusual exhibition arranged by The Cleveland Museum of Art: an exchange of pictures between children in Greater Cleveland and in Odawara. One hundred works by 1st- through 6th-graders at Anton Grdina School (Cleveland), Lomond Elementary School (Shaker Heights), (Westwood Elementary School (Warrensville Heights), Caledonia Elementary School (East Cleveland), Hilltop Elementary School (Beachwood), and State Road School (Parma), were on exhibition at Odawara City Hall in November and December 1989 and are now on a tour of all the schools in Odawara (through March 1990). This spring The Cleveland Museum of Art's Extensions Division will mount 80 works by children of the same ages from Odawara schools at Beck Center, and smaller exhibitions at each of the six participating schools. The Beck Center exhibition, which is free, opens to the public on Sunday, May 6, from 1 to 5pm; a preview for children, parents, and teachers of the six Cleveland-area schools will be held on Saturday, May 5, which is National Children's Day in Japan.

All the children were asked to make two-dimensional works in any media to show their daily lives, especially their families and schools, festivals, sports, summer

vacations, and scenes of their home towns. In some cases, the Japanese children collaborated with each other on a work. **Life Images** is more than an exchange of art, as children in each country tell their peers in the other about their lives and feelings.

The young artists are sending photos and personal comments with their works, along with biographical information. The children's photos and biographical information will be exhibited with their works in both countries; here, the exhibition at Beck Center will also include examples of curricula, books, and equipment that the Odawara children use.

Cleveland children will quickly recognize among the Odawara pictures an action-filled view of the girls' basketball team, a scene of gridlocked traffic, and a colorful painting of garbage collection, but may be surprised at scenes of their Japanese peers taking their turn at serving lunch to schoolmates, tending school gardens and chicken coops, or going to the train station and the open-air food market.

Odawara children can identify with Clevelanders' sports events, art classes, and autumn leaf-raking scenes, but will probably find Bar Mitzvahs and Halloween costumes unfamiliar and be surprised by the scale of American bedrooms and houses.

Schoolteachers and children in both countries have been enthusiastic about the trade. Cleveland-area teachers will introduce a non-Western culture to their students by integrating the installations into their classroom curricula. Two Museum instructors, Debbie Dewey and Kei McMillen, will offer workshops in the participating Cleveland schools.

Plans for the exchange, launched two-and-a-half years ago, were completed in August 1989 between the Museum and Kiichiro Yamahashi, the mayor of Odawara. The Cleveland Museum appears to be the first American museum to have carried out such a project, reports project coordinator Marjorie Williams of the Museum's

Department of Education and Public Programs. Motoko Naruse is coordinator of the project in Japan. Edythe Zimmerman, a social worker, initiated the project, served as its cross-cultural consultant, and interviewed the students. Juliann Weber, a graphic designer and art teacher who is the artistic consultant, flew to Japan in November with the Cleveland children's art and returned with the Odawara children's work. Anita Rogoff, professor emeritus of art and former director of art education and studio at CWRU, is also a consultant. Negotiations with Odawara City Hall proceeded with the help of Yoshio Suzuki, father of Chizuko Mitsumoto, of Mitzie Verne's gallery of Japanese art, who grew up in Odawara. Besides Mayor Yamahashi, three Odawara City Hall officials helped to make the project a reality: Teruo Kobayashi, Head of the Division of School Education; Fumio Kasiwagi, Head of the Board of Education; and Mrs. Tomoe Kato, Councilwoman.

Continental Airlines contributed airfare for the couriers and transportation for the children's art to and from Japan. Sponsors also include the Cleveland Indians Gift Shop/Gate A at the Galleria, which provided some of the gifts for the Japanese children; The Little Tikes Company; J.R. Holcomb's Educational Materials; the Cleveland Institute of Art; and Mr. and Mrs. Masayasu Tachi of Lakewood, Ohio. The Greater Cleveland Growth Association donated posters of Cleveland as gifts to the Mayor of Odawara.

#

For additional information, photographs, or color slides, please contact Denise Horstman, Public Information Office, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland OH 44106; 216/421-7340.